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ABSTRACT

A proposed teacher education program would provide more diversified student teacher training through the cooperation of the ten members of the College Center of the Finger Lakes and the school districts of the Southern Tier of New York State. The program has three major objectives: 1) to increase the utilization of objective evaluation techniques to assess and upgrade the teaching strategies of each student and master teacher, and to instruct college faculty and student teacher supervisors in the application of teaching-learning assessment instruments; 2) to facilitate the improvement of student teaching through the reorganization of the administration of student teaching, to create model student teaching centers, and to centralize the administration of the placement and assessment of student teachers; 3) to diversify the number of professional development experiences student teachers have available to them. The program would provide improved supervision through the increased number and type of college supervisor observations, and would serve as a model for other groups of small, liberal-arts oriented colleges. It would provide training for supervisors, master teachers, and student teachers, as well as for the staff of the participating school systems. It is planned to continue the project for 3 years, with an advisory council to evaluate it and recommend ways in which it can be improved, expanded, and extended. [Not available in hardcopy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (MBM)

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A COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO STUDENT TEACHING

CAST

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CAST

A CONSORTIUM APPROACH TO STUDENT TEACHING

I. One Need in Educational Personnel Development

A central component of any teacher education program is the student teaching experience. Despite frequent criticisms of the form and content of this aspect of pre-service teacher preparation, it is commonly agreed that student teachers find this activity to be the most valuable element in their professional sequence. Perhaps it is for this reason that major improvements in the process of student teaching have lagged behind more striking developments in the remaining portions of the teacher education program. One study (A Study, 1966) highlighted ten major difficulties in the organization of one student teacher program. These difficulties will be cited here because ample evidence exists to document the conclusion that similar problems afflict nearly all such programs.

1. There is inadequate supervision on the part of the colleges.

2. There is a lack of continuity from year to year in the persons serving as college supervisors.

3. There is a lack of coordination between the school system and the participating colleges in developing a consistent program.

4. The policy statements adopted by the school board and the handbook formerly available have inadequately described both policies and procedures.

5. There is a lack of renumeration to teachers for extra responsibility and work involved on the part of teachers.

6. There is inadequate time for conferences between the student teacher and the supervising teacher.

7. There have been instances of arbitrary assignment of teachers to the program.

8. There is a lack of standards for determining which classroom teachers are capable of serving as supervising teachers.

9. There has been some assignment of student teachers to classes outside of their major field of preparation.

10. There has been a lack of consistent practices in the evaluation of the student teacher's performance.

To be sure, these are not the only problems that confront institutions wishing to revitalize their student teaching experience. Merrill, (1967) for instance, has noted additional shortcomings. For one, involvement in the supervision of student teachers does not provide college or school personnel with the status or incentive given to competing activities. A lack of financial support is given to the program and travel requirements may be onerous. There is a confusion over administrative and instructional responsibilities.

. These and other problems become particularly acute for the smaller, private liberal arts colleges which attempt to structure successful student teacher programs in the face of significant problems endemic to private higher education. In New York State, private and independent higher education has made a continuing contribution to the strengthening of the State's ability to provide an adequate supply of teachers for our elementary and secondary schools. It is likely that the small liberal arts colleges will always contribute substantial numbers of teachers to the State's schools. This past year 8,803 graduates of private colleges and universities were recommended for state certification within the teaching profession. This represents nearly half of the total of 22,377 certificates issued (Division of Teacher Education, 1969).

The Regents' Statewide Plan for the Expansion and Development of Higher Education, (1968:34) stressed three components of quality teacher training programs: 1) a broad liberal arts foundation; 2) mastery of a field of specialization; and 3) acquisition of pedagogical skills. The liberal arts orientation of independent institutions of higher education enables them to build from strength in the first two of these categories. The third component can and has been met to some extent, however student teaching practices have been notably insulated from the rapid and beneficial innovations within the pedagogical component. This shortcoming is common to public as well as private institutions.

Pressing problems converge to make the restructuring and upgrading of student teaching a priority area for attack. In a recent survey of New York State teacher training institutions Bunt (1968) found that extensive overlapping occurred in the placement of student teachers.

> Twenty-six institutions indicated that a typical school system with which they placed student teachers worked with two and four different colleges and/or universities. Fourteen...with between five and nine. (p.4)

This same survey found that fifty percent of the placements made were judged by half of the institutions (twenty-four of forty-eight) to be under high quality. Frequent reasons given for the lack of quality places available centered on the inability the institutions preparing teachers to identify an interested and qualified population of master (cooperating) teachers, as well as to the absence of training programs for the master teacher. This prohibits the master

teacher from assisting the student teacher in a manner which is consistent with the philosophy of the teacher training institutions. Kruszansky (1968:138) has noted that significant number of master teachers take on a student teacher even though they are not inclined to take on the responsibility for guiding the student, and they often do not have the preparation needed to play a constructive role as a master teacher.

> Conscripts may seem to get the job done, but only in a general or statistical sense, and at excessive cost. In the teaching of teachers such costs may indeed be viewed as general in nature, but they are also particular and qualitative, since each of those (mis) taught share some portion of the total loss.

One viable approach by which smaller liberal arts colleges and universities to solve these problems has been suggested by Smith (1968). He contends that an interinstitutional mechanism between college and school level institutions for cooperative teacher preparation could lead to programs which focus on both staff development and operational research. Clinical teaching centers organized through joint action could begin to stimulate the emergence of innovative attempts to go beyond the mere provision of a practicum, could entail the use of laboratory diagnosis and experimentation within the classroom situation. The cooperation pictured by Smith envisions joining the forces of colleges and universities with local school systems and the state education agency.

The College Center of the Finger Lakes is an existing consortium of ten institutions of higher education located along the Southern Tier of New York State. Nine of these institutions - Alfred University, Cazenovia College, Hartwick

College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Elmira College, Ithaca College, Keuka College, St. Bonaventure University, and Wells College - presently operate programs which lead to either state certification in teaching - or to nursery education aide status. The education department faculty of these institutions have been identifying areas in which they might strengthen and expand their student teaching experiences. Earlier activities and this proposal is the result of these discussions. It is our expectation that the several components of the Cooperative Approach to Student Teaching (CAST) will enable the participating colleges to operate more diversified student teacher programs while increasing both the efficiency with which these programs are administered and the revitalization impact they have on cooperating schools.

Close cooperation with the area's school systems has been made possible by the staff of the Southern Tier Regional Education Center. This organization funded under E.S.E.A., Title III has developed a program of cooperation between the forty-two districts encompassed by their five county service area. The joint planning and cooperation between the College Center and the Southern Tier Regional Education Center has served to further many desirable and worthy goals. Since many of the local school districts are within the Appalachia area, they are unable to participate in many aspects of the mainstream of education without substantial aid from outside of the region, or without the establishment of mechanisms for effectively sharing and distributing the resources available to them.

Amershek and Barbour (1968) recently completed a survey of innovative programs in student teaching across the United States. Of the twenty-seven such programs reported, the summary descriptions indicated that none of these programs have attempted to incorporate the use of objective approaches to the study and improvement of teaching. The avoidance of this form of performance assessment is contrary to the stated recommendations recently emerging from both research and practice. Merrill's handbook on student teaching (1967), for instance, noted that:

> Very few efforts have been made to assess the value of the student teaching program by following through either in evaluation or in an effort to assist graduates to adjust further to teaching after entering the profession. This failure creates illusions of grandeur as well as feelings of depression on the part of those responsible for the student teacher program...what we know about examining teacher behavior and its effect on learning in the classroom must be used. For example, the Flanders-Amidon categories of teacher behavior and rich hypotheses about subsequent pupil reaction have been in existence for over five years. Student teacher programs must examine, record, and evaluate teacher behavior. (1968:20-21)

Similar conclusions were drawn by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1964). As an integral part of a teacher education program built upon theoretically based concepts and frameworks, research validated procedures should be applied throughout the professional sequence. Special note is made of the emerging teacher behavior techniques.

> The analytical approach through concrete material is designed to increase the ability of the prospective teacher to identify and relate the variables involved in teaching. The systematic study of the teaching process and the environment for teaching provides a substantive basis for concept formation.

> Behaviorally the prospective teacher should be able to apply aspects of the several analytical techniques to a given teaching example and explain or demonstrate the meaning and significance of the concepts identified. (pp. 16)

> Flanders has been one of the leading researchers attempting to develop more effective instruments for faculty-student interaction. As a result of his studies he points up the practicality of increased use of this form of study.

> As a group, teachers are isolated from systematic information about their own behavior. However, research indicates that teacher performance depends upon the range of behavior a teacher can produce, the self-control required to provide particular patterns of influence, a teacher's sensity to predict the consequences of alternative actions (pp.229).

It should be noted that the ten Model Elementary Teacher Education Programs initially planned for the U. S. Office of Education have recommended that these procedures be made an integral part of their organization (A Reader's Guide. 1969). However, these models contemplate programs serving large institutions.

The availability of similar comments are coming from many serious and knowledgeable critics of teacher training. As instruments such as the Flanders interaction analysis scales, OScAR 5V and other objective schemes come to be accepted quantum advances in the improvement of teaching are possible. The appearance of such materials allow students of teaching to progress to a meaningful description and assessment of teacher behavior for identifying areas in which changes can be sought rather than for evaluating behavior or subjective grounds simply for rating teachers. Through direct observation and assessment, as measured by the various interaction chronographs, it is possible to interrelate the various elements in the teaching-

learning environment. Data is building to permit the interrelation of theoretically based relationships founded in firm psychological and sociological constructs.

By measuring and displaying response patterns in the classroom, while at the same time maintaining an actual record of exactly what transpires in the classroom (via video tape) it is feasible that these techniques may give us the means for preparing teachers who are able to consciously select their teaching pattern to achieve stated realistic goals. Knowledge of these materials should begin to pervade both pre-service and in-service instructional programs. Medley (1967) has stated

> The professional sequence in education should... include instruction in...teacher behavior as a part of almost every course the teacher takes; indeed it might well be organized around (this) concept from its beginning. The entire content of teacher education could well be organized around the study of how teachers behave, how their behaviors vary, and how these variations relate to pupil learning, success in teaching, and to all the other types studied in the teacher education curriculum. (pp.10)

II. Program Activities To Date

An initial grant of approximately $60,000 was awarded to the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Schuyler, Chemung, and Tioga Counties under the Education Professions Development Act, Part B2 to begin the construction of a system by which the pre-service and in-service training of teachers can be based upon objective behavior and performance assessment techniques. Three identifiable groups of persons are being given background knowledge and exposure to the value and limitations of these devices - education department faculty, master teachers and student teachers. A brief listing of various components of this project includes the following:

A. A one-week institute for 25 college level education faculty was held to introduce these individuals to current knowledge regarding assessment techniques. Instruction in this field is absent in the preparation of most education faculty since this area has only recently crystallized and shown promise of contributing to the advancement of teaching.

B. An in-service inter and intra-college seminar and workshop series is being conducted to provide all college faculty with the necessary competence to incorporate particular instruments as a part of their teacher education curriculums. Primary instruction has been given to: Flanders' Interaction Analysis, Burkhart's Inquiry Process Grid, Medley's OScAR 5V, Aschner and Gallagher's Questioning Strategies, Bales' Interaction Process Analysis, and Mager and Vimcets Measuring Behavioral Objectives. However, instruction has also been given to other formal and self-constructed approaches to instructional evaluation.

C. Workshops varying in length from one-week in time to a half-day are being held for master and student teachers since it is obvious that student teachers will benefit from this approach, both groups will have to be cognizant of the bases upon which this form of analysis is made. An adequate training program for master teachers will provide a rational basis upon which the selection of master teachers can be made.

D. Student teaching centers are being organized in which substantially improved student teaching placements can be made and the supervision of these students can be facilitated. Special attention and instruction is provided to these centers to assure the implementation of the continuous assessment of teacher-class interaction. Some of the centers are to be elementary and junior high schools, while others are to be secondary school departments. Interinstitutional supervision of the student teachers will be possible, as will the interinstitutional placement of the student teachers. It is expected that at least one urban center will be opened to all of the schools.

E. Administrative mechanisms for centralizing and coordinating some aspects of the teacher preparation program are being explored. Joint placement of student and graduating teachers, cooperative utilization of audio and visual materials, mutual utilization of video taped microteaching clips, inter-staff exchanges for lectures, seminars and workshops, and cataloguing of an area directory of major instructional resources are among these efforts.

F. Teacher education curriculum materials focusing on performance assessment techniques and their incorporation in preparatory programs are being assembled and organized for utilization by all of the participating colleges and schools. Instructional modules are being developed and shared among these institutions. Those activities have particular relevance to several colleges that are initiating new teacher education programs this year.

G. An Advisory Council has been organized to evaluate the activities of the CAST project generally and to recommend ways in which the organization and operation of the training activities can be improved, expanded and extended. The Advisory Council consists of the education department chairmen (of the four-year institutions named), the chairman of the nursery education department at Cazenovia College, the project director and a specially appointed staff member of the Southern Tier Regional Education Center. This group meets at least bi-monthly as a group as well as in smaller committees. The activities of these individuals will include pre-and advanced program planning, intercollege coordination, supervision of institutional utilization of institute and workshop materials as used by their education departments, planning and implementing at least two workshops for area faculty with the assistance of the project coordinator, and participation on the Advisory Council.

The program underway should be of significant importance in upgrading the experience received by practice teachers.

In addition to improved supervision as a result of increased numbers and kinds of college supervisor observations, there will be a qualitative advance in the basis for supervision. The focus on self-analysis through objective classroom and teaching assessment instruments provides the basis for progress in quality after student teaching has been completed, as well as during this period. The emphasis on performance appraisal is consistent with the most advanced statewide goals for teacher certification and program accreditation.

As a model for other institutions, the cooperative program outlined serves as a unique and innovative attempt to assist the small, liberal arts-oriented institutions of higher education to maintain their ability to provide optimal teacher education programs and to assist schools in their area. The interinstitutional structure of the program permits the development of an efficient approach to alleviating many problems that confront smaller colleges and universities. Within the framework of this program a common component of student teacher supervision is stressed, however, elements contained in each institution's student teacher program need not be identical. Adaptions in the choice of instruments used and their relation to the entire training program will allow each college and university to strengthen itself through the development of a specialization which can be shared with the other participating institutions. A centralization of the placement function would assist all of the institutions in efficiently placing their student teachers on a planned basis, rather than on a shot-gun approach.

The format of this program stimulates the emergence of an integrated program since it includes training components for all types of education faculty (not just the supervisors), for master teachers and for student teachers. The utilization of classroom and teacher behavior assessment instruments will become an important consideration in the synthesis of the entire teacher education program. This thread provides one of the few attempts to make research based techniques a central part of the process of teaching.

Participating school systems will benefit from activities of the project which relate to individual teachers and schools in an integral way. The basic concepts underlying performance appraisal should assist in improving the teaching capabilities of the master teachers, as well as improving their own supervisory roles.